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GENERAL NOTES.

The New Allegheny Observatory.—The new Allegheny Observatory, situated in Riverview Park, Pittsburgh, was dedicated on the afternoon of Wednesday, August 28th, in the presence of the members of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, and of many of the Pittsburgh friends of the institution. The principal instruments of the new observatory are a 13-inch visual refractor, a 30-inch reflector (a memorial to JAMES EDWARD KEELER), and a 30-inch photographic refractor (a memorial to WILLIAM THAW and his son, WILLIAM THAW, JUNIOR). The last of these telescopes is not quite completed, as the objective remains to be supplied. Addresses were made by Dr. JOHN A. BRASHEAR, chairman of the Observatory Committee; by Dr. SAMUEL BLACK McCORMICK, chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, of which the observatory forms the astronomical department; by Dr. FRANK SCHLESINGER, director of the Allegheny Observatory, and by Professor E. C. PICKERING, director of the Harvard College Observatory. Mrs. WILLIAM REED THOMPSON, the daughter of WILLIAM THAW and the sister of WILLIAM THAW, JUNIOR, closed the exercises with the unveiling of the memorial tablet on the Thaw telescope.—*Science,* September 13, 1912.

The Atmosphere at Great Heights.—Luminous phenomena like meteor trains and auroras at heights of 200 kilometers (124 miles) or more have long proved the existence of some atmosphere, however tenuous, even at these great heights. According to Professor W. J. HUMPHREYS, the atmosphere at a height of 150 kilometers (93 miles) consists of 99.73 per cent (by volume) of hydrogen and 0.27 per cent of helium, with a total pressure of 0.0043 in millimeters of mercury. As a result of recent investigations, Dr. A. WEGENER concludes[1] that there is an atmosphere of perceptible density even up to 500 kilometers (311 miles) and that in the highest strata there must be an unknown gas in addition to and lighter than hydrogen.

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[1] *Himmel und Erde,* July, 1912.

He suggests that this gas be called "geocoronium" because of its similarity to "coronium," which is supposed to exist in the atmosphere of the Sun.—*Science,* August 23, 1912.

Dr. S. Albrecht, formerly First Astronomer at the Observatorio Nacional, Córdoba, Argentina, has been appointed Junior Professor of Astronomy in the Detroit Observatory, University of Michigan.

In connection with the celebrations of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Royal Society, which took place in July, the honorary degree of Doctor of Science was conferred on Professor Backlund, director of the Pulkova Observatory, by the University of Oxford, and on Professor E. B. Frost, director of the Yerkes Observatory, by the University of Cambridge.

The degree of Doctor of Science has been conferred on Dr. Lewis Boss, director of Dudley Observatory, by Dartmouth College; upon Professor W. J. Hussey, director of the Detroit Observatory, University of Michigan, by Brown University. The degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred by Lehigh University at its recent commencement upon Professor C. L. Doolittle, director of the Flower Observatory of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Astronomical Society of Barcelona held a very successful General Exposition of Lunar Studies during the months of May and June. The exhibition of lunar drawings, photographs and models was an unusually complete one and aroused great interest. A well-illustrated catalogue of the exposition has been published, and forms a very interesting monograph on selenographical studies, past and present.

Dr. Jean Mascari, of the Paris Observatory, has been appointed director of the Lyons Observatory in succession to M. André, who had held the position from the foundation of the observatory in 1879 until his death on June 6, 1912.

The department of physics and astronomy at Wellesley, of which Miss Sarah F. Whiting has been the head since its foundation in 1878 (at first as the department of physics only), has been divided. Miss Whiting continues as the head of the department of astronomy and director of the Whitin Observatory.

Among the eight afternoon lectures for which provision was made at the fifth International Congress of Mathematicians, which met at the University of Cambridge from August 21st to 28th, was one by Professor E. W. Brown of Yale University on "Researches on Periodicity in the Solar System" and one by Sir Joseph Larmor of Cambridge on "The Dynamics of Radiation."

Sir George H. Darwin, on April 26, 1912, delivered a lecture before the Royal Institution of Great Britain on "Sir William Herschel." This lecture is printed in full in *Science* for July 26, 1912.

In the Lowell Observatory *Bulletin*, Number 53, an account is given of observations made to determine the rotation period of the planet *Uranus* by the spectrographic method. From spectrograms on seven nights, measured by Lowell and by Slipher, the period of $10^h\ 50^m$ is deduced, the rotation being in the same direction as the orbital revolution of the four satellites of the planet.

We regret to announce the death, on October 5, 1912, of Dr. Lewis Boss, director of the Dudley Observatory at Albany. Dr. Boss was sixty-six years of age and had been director of Dudley Observatory for thirty-six years. His many valuable publications have given him the first rank among American astronomers in the field of the astronomy of position. His classic researches will long retain their value, and the loss to American astronomy through his death is an exceedingly heavy one.